

MEMORIAL

RALPH GORMAN HILLS

By JOHN EAGER HOWARD, M.D.

Ralph Gorman Hills, one of the most devoted members of the American Clinical and Climatological Association and one of its most popular, died on September 20, 1977 from complications following a ruptured abdominal aneurysm.

Dr. Hills was born in Washington, D.C. on January 19, 1902. His father was a lawyer and diplomat; his maternal grandfather had been a United States senator from Maryland. Brought up in Washington, Dr. Hills attended The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania from 1916 until his graduation in 1921. While at this undergraduate school he excelled in track athletics, being interscholastic champion in the shot-put, as well as competing in the hammer throw, high hurdles and even the pole vault. He competed in the Olympic games in 1921 at the age of 18. He also played on the football team and was class President.

At Princeton University, from which he graduated in 1925, Dr. Hills continued his track activities, was captain of the track team and in his senior year again competed in the Olympic games, this time being awarded third place in the shot-put. Again he also played on the football team and was class President.

Dr. Hills then attended the Johns Hopkins Medical School, graduating in the class of 1929. He took a year of internship at the Union Memorial Hospital, followed by assistant residency and later residency on the Private Medical Service of the Johns Hopkins Hospital. He then went into private practice which was continued until his sudden catastrophic illness.

In 1928 Dr. Hills married Mary Joe Dixon, daughter of the then governor of Montana. They had two sons, one of whom followed in his father's steps as physician. His wife and both sons survive him.

Dr. Hills served overseas during World War II with the 18th General Hospital, comprised entirely of Hopkins physicians. At the time of discharge he had achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Throughout a long term in the practice of medicine, Dr. Hills acquired a host of devoted patients and friends. His gentle kindly manner in the huge frame which supported him created a great sense of warmth and confidence. Owing to these characteristics and his generous disposition, the chronically ill flocked to his door, making life at times overburdensome to him. In later life he lightened his case load and worked part-time in the Hopkins clinic, caring for the indigent of East Baltimore.

The teaching of the art of medicine was a favorite occupation, and during his entire medical career he taught students, house staff and nurses at the Johns Hopkins and Union Memorial Hospitals.

Dr. Hills was a member of the staff and visiting physician to the Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Union Memorial Hospital and the Greater Baltimore Medical Center. At one time he was an elected trustee of Princeton University, of which he remained a devoted alumnus and to which he gave considerably of his time and energy.

To his wife, Mary Joe, and to his two sons the American Clinical and Climatological Association extends its heartfelt sympathy. We have lost a devoted member and friend, one who stood for all that is best in our Association.